

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06  
PRS-01 IO-13 /078 W  
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R 301345Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8842  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 14377

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: UR, EG, US  
SUBJ: SOVIET DCM FAREWELL CALL

1. SOVIET EMBASSY COUNSELOR AND DCM POGOS AKOPOV PAID FAREWELL CALL ON AMB TODAY. AKOPOV, WHO IS AN ARABIST, HAS SPENT A TOTAL OF FIFTEEN YEARS IN EGYPT, TEN OF THESE ON HIS PRESENT TOUR. HE HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO MOSCOW, WHERE HE EXPECTS TO WORK IN MFA MIDDLE EAST DEPT. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION, FOLLOWING POINTS WERE DISCUSSED:

2. ME PEACE NEGOTIATIONS: AKOPOV ASSERTED BOTH US AND USSR ARE ACTIVELY WORKING FOR PEACE IN THE AREA. WHILE ADMITTING PROBLEMS, HE PROFESSED TO BE OPTIMISTIC THAT PROGRESS WOULD BE MADE. HE WAS HIGHLY COMPLIMENTARY OF PUBLIC POSITION PRES CARTER HAS TAKEN ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ME PEACE, WHICH HE TERMED A CONSIDERABLE ADVANCE OVER PREVIOUS US POSITIONS. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY TRUE WITH RESPECT TO THE PALESTINIANS, WHOM HE CALLED THE CORE OF ME PROBLEM. UNLESS PALESTINIAN PROBLEM RESOLVED, HE OPINED, THERE CAN BE NO PEACE IN ME. HE REFERRED WITH SATISFACTION TO EXCHANGES WE HAVE HAD WITH SOVIETS IN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON ON THE SUBJECT AND HOPED THIS COOPERATION WILL CONTINUE. HE ALSO NOTED WITH SATISFACTION SECRETARY'S UPCOMING MEETING WITH GROMYKO IN VIENNA.  
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3. PLO: AKOPOV AFFIRMED THAT SOVIETS HAD URGED PLO TO ACCEPT UN RES 242 WITH RESERVATION ON REFUGEE ASPECTS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE USG/PLO DIALOGUE. HE CLAIMED THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD DISCUSSED SUBJECT HERE IN CAIRO WITH PLO LEADERS SEVERAL TIMES. ALTHOUGH PCC HAD DECLINED TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION, HE THOUGHT THE DOOR WAS STILL OPEN. PLO LEADERS ARE

BARGAINING FOR MORE SPECIFIC INDICATION OF WHAT THEY CAN HOPE TO GET OUT OF THE DIALOGUE. IN TALKS WITH PLO REPS IN CAIRO, TWO POINTS HAD CONSTANTLY ARISEN: FIRST, WHAT IS NATURE OF PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND" OF WHICH USG HAS SPOKEN; SECOND, WHO WILL GUARANTEE THAT PALESTINIAN "NATIONAL RIGHTS" ARE ADEQUATELY SAFEGUARDED IN ME PEACE PROCESS. GIVEN ISRAELI STANCE, PLO REPS HAD ARGUED THAT IT WAS UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT THEM TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL BY ACCEPTING RES 242. THEY WOULD BE THROWING AWAY THEIR PRINCIPAL CARD.

4. I TOLD AKOPOV THAT WE REGRET PCC FAILURE TO ACT AND HOPE PLO WILL IN DUE COURSE RECONSIDER. SHOULD WE BE ABLE TO ENTER INTO AN OFFICIAL DIALOGUE WITH PLO, WE BELIEVE THIS WILL OPEN NEW POSSIBILITIES RE RESOLVING CRITICAL PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION ISSUE. ON DETAILS PALESTINIAN HOMELAND, THIS WAS A MATTER FOR THE PARTIES TO NEGOTIATE AT GENEVA. AKOPOV ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS SO.

5. SADAT'S COTTON EMBARGO ON USSR: ASKED ABOUT STATUS GOE COTTON EMBARGO AGAINST USSR, AS ANNOUNCED BY PRES SADAT TWO WEEKS AGO, AKOPOV SAID SOVIET EMB HAS HEARD NOTHING OFFICIAL ABOUT THE MATTER. SUBSEQUENT TO SADAT'S PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT, SEVERAL SHIPMENTS OF COTTON CONSIGNED TO USSR HAD IN FACT BEEN LOADED ON SOVIET FREIGHTERS AT ALEXANDRIA. EGYPTIAN SUPREME COTTON BOARD HAD RECENTLY NOTIFIED SOVIET EMB THAT USSR COTTON QUOTA CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION. SINCE

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THAT TIME, NOTHING FURTHER HAS BEEN HEARD. (WILL BE RECALLED FAHMY TOLD US SOVIET COTTON QUOTA WILL BE REDUCED). AKOPOV, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING HIGH QUALITY OF EGYPTIAN LONG-STAPLE COTTON, DISMISSED IT AS OF NO IMPORTANCE TO SOVIET ECONOMY, NOTING SOVIET UNION GROWS ALMOST A MILLION TONS OF COTTON A YEAR. HE DOUBTED THAT GOE WILL IN FINAL ANALYSIS PROCEED WITH DECISION TO EMBARGO COTTON SALES TO USSR. IF IT DOES SO, HOWEVER, SOVIETS WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER WHETHER OR NOT TO RETALIATE. SOVIETS, HE ASSERTED, WANT GOOD TRADING RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT. AMONG OTHER THINGS, SOVIETS ARE CURRENTLY SHIPPING 600,000 TONS OF COKING COAL PER YEAR TO EGYPT FOR HELWAN STEEL PLANT. HE THOUGHT HELWAN PLANT WILL BE IN SERIOUS DIFFICULTY IF SUCH SOVIET COAL SHIPMENTS ARE STOPPED. HE DISCLAIMED KNOWLEDGE OF ANY INTENTION TO STOP THEM.

6. GOMYKO VISIT: ASKED ABOUT GROMYKO VISIT, AKOPOV SAID TIMING UNCERTAIN. ALTHOUGH IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED TAKE PLACE LATE AUG, I.E., PRIOR TO UNGA, SADAT'S ANTI-SOVIET STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS HARDLY MAKE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE CONDUCTIVE TO SUCH VISIT. GROMYKO, HE POINTEDLY NOTED, IS NOT JUST ANOTHER MINISTER, BUT A MEMBER OF THE POLITBURO AND MUST BE TREATED AS

SUCH. ALTHOUGH NOTHING WAS DEFINITE, HE DOUBTED THAT A  
GROMYKO VISIT IS LIKELY TO MATERIALIZE PRIOR TO UPCOMING UNGA  
SESSION. WHETHER ONE TAKES PLACE AFTER THAT TIME DEPENDS UPON  
STATE OF EGYPTIAN/SOVIET RELATIONS.  
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## Message Attributes

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